

..A PAIR OF PLOTTERS..

"For the best of all the miracles the summertime can work us, is the canvas-tented, sawdust-scented, much-frequented circus!"

"A circus! Comin' to town!" Old Martha Stebbins, pressing out her youngest grandchild's Sunday gown, paused with iron suspended. "For the land's sake, Billie! Do tell! Are you sure?"

Billie was thrilled by the interest which his news had awakened. Therefore, he looked as imperturbable as possible. He hoisted himself up on the table, and sat there picking sandbars off his sleeves, and swinging his bare legs.

"Gimme a cookie, an' I'll tell you all about it."

There was no compromising with Billie. He was a young man of his word. Of this his grandmother was aware. She looked at him hard a moment. Then she set the iron down, and went into the pantry. She came back with two cookies.

"There!" she said; "now go on!"

"After I'd been to mill I went up town. There was two men puttin' pictures on the blank wall near the livery stable. They'd got 'em up already by the lumber yard. Another fellow was goin' into the shops, and gettin' signs put in the windows. And, I say, grandma, you just want to see them pictures. They're—they're jimmies."

Grandma ironed on, but less energetically than before the return of Billie. "Go on an' tell me about them pictures," she urged. "I used to like awful well to go to circuses when I was young. Seems like I went to every one that came to our town. One ain't been near this place since I come here to live with your ma. That was when Emily Louise was born—fifteen years ago."

Billie went on to tell her of the glories of the posters. He gallantly gave ladies the preference in his description. He first told her about the bare-armed female, standing in the Roman chariot, driving the plunging steeds; about the little girl, standing on a white Sheikland pony; about the radiant damsel in the abbreviated skirt, who made flying leaps through paper hoops; about the muscular sisters who swung from trapezes. Then the men came in for their share of admiring remarks. He was half-way from the ringmaster to the clown, and grandma was listening with breathless delight, when a step was heard in the hall. Grandma guiltily picked up her cold iron and pattered across the kitchen to the stove for a hot one.

"Mother! You got that ironin' most done?"

The voice suited the face, a hard, intolerant face, with dull eyes and converging lines around the mouth.

"Mas'ly, Belinda!" cried back the old lady with nervous cheerfulness. "Ain't morn'n half a dozen more pieces, Billie here's got back from mill."

She moistened the tips of her fingers with her tongue, and spat away on the iron to test its temperature.

"I can see that," tartly. "Billie, your father got off with that stock? That's good. Now, I don't want you settin' round like this when there's his chores to be done well's your own. You hear?"

"Yes'm."

There was a brief silence when she had gone. Martha Stebbins seemed to see through a mist the garments she was ironing. Suddenly the kitchen seemed smaller and hotter than it had five minutes ago. All at once, too, the lovely ladies, and dashing men, and wonderful animals of the circus seemed more distant, inaccessible.

"Are—you thinkin' you'll be let go, Billie?"

"Dunno." He lifted his foot and looked pensively at the stonebriar on the toe. "Will if I can. I'll see if I can't get a job carryin' water for the elephant. Lot's of boys get in that way."

"The elephant!" She looked across at him with brightening eyes. "Have they got real elephant along? I ain't seen elephant I don't know when."

Something wistful in her tone struck Billie. He was not a particularly bright boy, but he was affectionate in a dumb and clumsy way. He had never known the joy of self-expression, but he and grandma had had some secrets of their own. These secrets, involving as they frequently did her connivance and her silence, were necessary to his humanity and protection. Now he wished—he hardly knew what he wished.

"Say, grandma, I kinder think you'd like to go to the circus yourself!"

"Me!" she shrieked. "O, dear, no! Whatever put such an idea in your head. Me—I'm that old! And besides—gracious, if I ain't gone and scorched that shirt! I hope your ma won't notice it, but I got that flustered—to think of such a thing!"

Billie looked puzzled. "Well, somehow," he persisted, stubbornly, "I do think so, grandma. And," he added boldly, "I don't see why you shouldn't either, if you got a mind to—there!"

"Why, Billie!" she cried, weakly, but there was a yielding tremor in her voice. She put down the iron, glancing furtively at the door as she did so. She went over to the table, and stood next the audacious young fellow.

"Your ma would never hear to such a thing. Besides, we ain't got the money."

work enough to pay for myself sure. You've got that 15 cents Mrs. Murray give you for makin' her check-row sunbunnit. I can sell Tom Cass my pigeon-house. He'll let me have a dime for it. The only trouble is the gettin' there. It's a good four-mile to town. Ma wouldn't hear to us takin' the horse out after sundown, and you never could—"

"I could—O, I could, Billie!" she broke in excitedly. Her wrinkled old face was radiant—her knotty old hands were trembling. "Two wouldn't be enny harder than bein' on my feet from 5 to the mornin' till after supper like I am. I could walk every step of it, but—" the enthusiasm began to fade out of her face. She drew a long sigh—a sigh of bitter renunciation. "Belinda—"

"Gramma!" He leaned forward, whispering as he did when he was asking her to leave the back buttery window open when he was to be out after hours. "Ma don't need to know—a single-thing about it!"

He unlimbered himself from the table. "I'll manage it!" he avowed confidently.

The week that followed was one of the most intense, the most absorbing anticipation Martha Stebbins had known in many a year. She went about the drudgery of her daily tasks on winged feet. She laughed at the jokes of the hired man. She brushed and cleaned Billie's best clothes until they did not look within a year of their age. She put a new band on his hat.



She fixed over her own ancient black bonnet during the temporary absence of her daughter. She smiled to herself when she was alone. Once, indeed, they even heard her singing.

"That don't sound like a hymn tune, mother!" remarked Mrs. Malone, suspiciously.

"It's 'The Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon,'" said the old lady softly.

O, the myriad fluttering moments and apprehensive instants which led up to that night! The temerity of undertaking a flight so unwonted, the danger of discovery, of recapture—these but enhanced the ecstasy of it all!

They made their escape while the youngest scion of the house of Malone was being put to bed upstairs. Down through the dusk, between the rows of straggling gooseberry bushes that caught at her gown, out into the path around the wheat field skirting the corn, grandma skurried like a little gray rabbit. And there, on the high road was Billie waiting for her—Billie, kindly, encouraging, swelling with the importance of the adventure. How he did strive to restrain her impetuosity. How he did explain that they had lots of time, that the seats were already secured, that she would be tired out before she got there. But neither speech nor movement was to be regarded in the exhilaration of that delicious experience. How sweet the green things smelled with the dew on them!

Ah, never would the memory of that night fade—that "witching, wonderful night!" The entrance into the lively town, the sight of the domed canvas tent, the hurrying crowds of pleasure-seekers, the lighted shops, the smell of the sawdust, the glimpse of tired faces, the torches, the music—best of all, O, incomparably best of all—the circus itself! Never did so stately a ringmaster stride into the arena. Never did

so witty a clown break his bones on collapsible barrels, and set the benches in a roar! No such agile acrobats ever balanced ladders and dangled from trapezes. No such lovely ladies ever poised and pirouetted on bareback horses. No such stately Amazon ever lashed her steeds to victory. And all the rest merged for Billie into one exquisite glow that was almost pain—pain and rapture—when he beheld:

Upon a milk-white pony,
Fit for a fairy queen,
The loveliest little damsel
His eyes had ever seen!

It was over. They had enjoyed it all. They had seen the animals—every one. They had eaten popcorn, and drank lemonade, and munches peanuts. And now they were plodding back to the farm along the road that stretched ahead like a ribbon of amber velvet.

Neither spoke. Their hearts were too full—full with memories, his with imaginings. They were as Daudet represents Parisians after the Salon: "Satisfied, but not weary, still thrilled by that air charged with artistic electricity." They made no mention of the morrow. Not even reproach them could wring this experience from them.

"Are you tired, grandma? Rest on me—lean hard."

"O, I ain't tired, Billie! I couldn't be tired tonight. I've had a beautiful time!"

The night was magical. The sleeping world was sweet. The hour was the full-blown rose of—

The peace of out-lived bliss!
—Chicago Tribune.

A TRAGEDY RECALLED.

Twenty-One Years Ago the Prince Imperial Was Slain by Zulus.

It is 21 years ago that General Buller, then a colonel commanding a detachment of the Frontier Light Horse, saw one day, as he was striding leisurely near his camp in Zululand, four men galloping wildly toward him. The foremost horseman was Lieutenant Carey, the three others his escort. They brought the news that prince imperial of France had been killed by the Zulus. Buller sent the cavalry brigade at daylight the next morning to recover the body. When they came to the place where Carey and his men had been surprised by the natives they found the horribly mutilated body of a dead trooper, and a few yards further on the body of the prince. He had the marks of many spear thrusts in his body, but was not mutilated in any way. Round his neck was a thin gold chain, and slung upon it was a miniature of his mother, ex-Empress Eugenie, and a tiny gold reliquary containing a fragment of the true cross. The relic was given by Pope Leo XIII to Charlemagne on the day when he crowned the great Frankish lord emperor of the west. Since then dynasty after dynasty of French monarchs had worn that scrap of gold and wood as a talisman. And as a talisman the Zulus regarded it, and they stayed their savage hands above the poor slain lad.—Utica Globe.

Furniture for Boy's Room.

Of course, John's room does not want a tea-table, but he does want a desk and a lounge as badly as his sister. Not a lounge on an elegant, dainty cover, ruffled pillows, etc., but a leather couch or a rattan divan, with cushions which have plenty of feathers, but no ruffles. This couch would, I fancy, have many a tale to tell in after years were it permitted to relate the number of air castles built, surrounded by its cozy pillows, of what is to be done "when I am a man," for a boy has just as many dreams as a girl; they differ from each other in quality rather than quantity. The desk, too, should be there—and there is no reason why it should not, for the very thing he wants can be bought for \$5 or \$10—for then there will be a place for him to wrestle with the "composition fend," and a place to keep his school notes and party invitations.

Grouse Reported Plentiful.

The game department of Ontario reports that the grouse will be very plentiful in western Ontario this year. In the neighborhood of Sarnia they will be particularly plentiful. The season has been particularly favorable to the breeding of game birds, none of the young having been drowned out by rains.

How the Chinese Line Their Pockets at the Expense of Foreigners.

It is that there is nothing for it but to pay this tax with resignation. It is useless to discharge a servant who habitually makes you pay more than the market price for your meat, vegetables and other supplies. His secret society knows to a cent the amount of the "squeeze" in which you have been imputed—"squeeze" being the suggestive pigeon-English expression for the illegitimate profits in question. The new servant is informed by the society of the "squeeze" extracted by his predecessor, and with imperturbable impudence he will continue to levy precisely the same toll. In the unlikely event of his having leanings toward honesty, the servant's secret society would wreak dire vengeance on him for his treachery to his order. The amount of the "squeeze" varies with each employer. It is regulated in the main by the extortion submitted to by the resident on his arrival in the country.

AN IDEAL VEHICLE.

Great Advantages of the Electromobile.

One great advantage of the electromobile over automobiles propelled by gasoline or steam power is its simplicity of operation. Except for the matter of steering, running an electromobile is exactly as simple as running a trolley car. The driver usually sits on the left side of the seat, the controller handle in his left hand and the steering bar in his right hand. The brake is operated by one foot pressing a pin with either foot. Either a steam or gasoline automobile requires the driver to be a pretty good steam engineer, as water gauges, steam indicators and fuel tanks must be watched while running the machine. A recent lecturer on the subject, referring to the operation of an electromobile only 10 per cent of the skill required to run it was needed on the road, while 90 per cent of the work, such as charging batteries, cleaning, etc., was expended on the vehicle while standing in the stable. He further stated that where the steam or gasoline automobile is concerned these figures are reversed. Considering its short radius of operation, usually from twenty-five to forty miles, the electromobile has come to be regarded as the ideal vehicle for city use. It will be but a few years, it is believed, before electric charging stations will be numerous all over the country, and then the electromobile will take its place with the steam and gasoline vehicles as a touring automobile.

As a Matter of Course.

"Now, boys, when I ask you a question you mustn't be afraid to speak right out and answer me," said a Sunday school superintendent, according to a writer in the Scottish American. "When you look around and see all those fine houses, farms and cattle, do you ever think you own them all now? Your fathers own them, do they not?" "Yes, sir," shouted a hundred voices. "Well, where will your fathers be thirty years from now?" "Dead!" shouted the boys. "That's right. And who will own all this property?" "Us boys!" shouted the urchins. "Right. Now, tell me—Did you ever, in going along the street, notice the drunkards lounging around the saloon door waiting for some one to treat them?" "Yes, sir; lots of them." "Well, where will they be thirty years from now?" "Dead!" exclaimed the boys. "And who will be the drunkards then?" "Us boys!" shouted the unabashed youngsters.

"With Rod and Gun in Arkansas" and "Enroute to the Southland," are the titles of two new booklets just issued by the General Passenger Department of the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad for free distribution. The first deals with hunting and fishing on the St. Francis river in Northeastern Arkansas, a region abundantly supplied with game fish, wild fowl, wild turkey, deer and bear. The second booklet contains a description of the points of interest, Chicago to Nashville, historical matter of the early days and many Indian legends common throughout Illinois, Indiana and Tennessee years ago. Both booklets are embellished with many fine half tone cuts and are most interesting. If you desire a copy of either send your address to C. L. Stone, G. P. & T. A., C. & E. I. R. R., Chicago.

A lover's quarrel is the sauce that seasons the courtship.

Ten Greatest American Railroads.

A table showing the mileage controlled by the principal railroad companies of this country on July, 1909, has been compiled by the Railway Age. The ten largest systems are as follows:

New York Central.....	10,430
Pennsylvania.....	10,392
Canadian Pacific.....	10,018
Southern Pacific.....	9,362
Chicago and Northwestern.....	8,463
Chicago, Burlington and Quincy.....	8,001
Southern Railway.....	7,887
Atholton, Topeka and Santa Fe.....	7,880
Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul.....	6,437
Union Pacific.....	5,594

—From the New York Sun.

The less a man boasts the more true worth he possesses.

The Truman Moss Estate of Crosswell, Sanilac county, Mich., whose advertisement appears in this issue, is the oldest firm in the real estate business in Michigan. They have large tracts of farming lands in the state, with easy access to all the eastern markets. They sell farms on liberal terms, buyers being allowed from 10 to 25 years in which to pay for same. It will pay you to write them for particulars.

The best way to keep a silk umbrella is not to lend it.

Best for the Bowels.

No matter what ails you, headache to a cancer, you will never get well until your bowels are put right. CASCARETS help nature, cure you without a gripe or pain, produce easy natural movements, cost you just 10 cents to start getting your health back. CASCARETS Candy Cathartic, the genuine, put up in metal boxes, every tablet has C. C. C. stamped on it. Beware of imitations.

Poverty is not a crime morally, but it is matrimonially.

Are You Using Allen's Foot-Ease?

It is the only cure for Swollen, Smarting, Burning, Sweating Feet, Corns and Bunions. Ask for Allen's Foot-Ease, a powder to be shaken into the shoes. At all Druggists and Shoe Stores, 25c. Sample sent FREE. Address Allen S. Olmsted, LeRoy, N. Y.

Never deliberately do any person an injustice.

Ladies Can Wear Shoes.

One size smaller after using Allen's Foot-Ease, a powder. It makes tight or new shoes easy. Cures swollen, hot, sweating, aching feet, ingrowing nails, corns and bunions. All druggists and shoe stores, 25c. Trial package FREE by mail. Address Allen S. Olmsted, LeRoy, N. Y.

Dead crows are silent mementos of the lost caws.

Some men never do anything without overdoing it.

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The whole value of manner lies in its sincerity.

Do your duty however unpleasant it may be.

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Hot words between friends are usually followed by a cold wave.

Hall's Catarrh Cure
Is a constitutional cure. Price, 75c.

Thirteen—An unlucky number when made up of a judge and jury.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup.
For children's coughing, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, stops teething, cures wind colic. See a bottle.

Life—A realistic story that would read like fiction if published.

I do not believe Piso's Cure for Consumption has an equal for coughs and colds. JOHN F. BOVEN, Trinity Springs, Ind., Feb. 15, 1900.

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The man who is in love with himself has no fear of being jilted.

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An interesting table of contents—that of the dinner table.

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